

Honoring Our Own

Each year, Ballard Spahr honors lawyers and staff for significant pro bono service.

Ballard Spahr donates \$1,000 to a charitable organization chosen by each award recipient. These awards are in addition to the \$25,000 Alan J. Davis Award given by the firm every summer in recognition of outstanding public service.

The 2015 honorees are:

Ballard Women Darfur Project — Ballard Women launched its first pro bono project in 2014, researching and writing a detailed white paper on international legal remedies to address sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur, Sudan. Legal Action Worldwide, a network of human rights lawyers and advisers working to improve access to justice and legal redress for those suffering from human rights violations, organized the effort. There were 27 Ballard Spahr attorneys who worked on the matter, investing more than 800 hours in the project.

Mount Moriah Cemetery Representation — Matthew McClure and Michael Fabius secured a judicial decree appointing a receivership to rehabilitate the historic Mount Moriah Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Pennsylvania. The cemetery was founded in 1855 by the Pennsylvania Legislature, and is the final resting place of 5,000 veterans, including 23 recipients of the Medal of Honor, and national icon Betsy Ross. After it was abandoned by its owners, the cemetery became a venue for drugs and prostitution, and an area of blight in the neighborhood. With ownership of the cemetery uncertain, civic leaders asked Ballard Spahr to help acquire control of the cemetery and establish a governing board to manage it.

Transgender Name Change Project — With the increasing visibility of transgender individuals, disparity between a transgender person's legal name and how he or she presents to the world is a growing issue. Several years ago, attorneys in our New Jersey office began working on name change petitions for transgender individuals referred by the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia. Last year, in partnership with Nevada Legal Services and Gender Justice, our Las Vegas office joined the effort to assist transgender individuals with name change petitions.

Baltimore Office — Our Baltimore office hosts a robust, diverse pro bono program, including Project HEAL, a medical-legal partnership with the Kennedy Krieger Institute, representing families of children with disabilities. Baltimore attorneys also defended a widow against specious charges about lead-paint poisoning of a child; represented a grocery store in an urban food desert, and worked to revitalize an arts district and low-income housing. They have handled the incorporation and ongoing representation of Star-Spangled 2000, the War of 1812 bicentennial celebration in Baltimore, and researched and offered legislative advocacy concerning education of homeless children. The attorneys regularly take on asylum cases, often participate in Wills for Heroes events with corporate clients, and have been recognized repeatedly for their fund-raising efforts on behalf of legal services organizations.

In 2015, Ballard Spahr donated 36,000 hours of pro bono legal work.